



## On the origins of the Ulster manuscript tradition, 1690-1800: some initial observations

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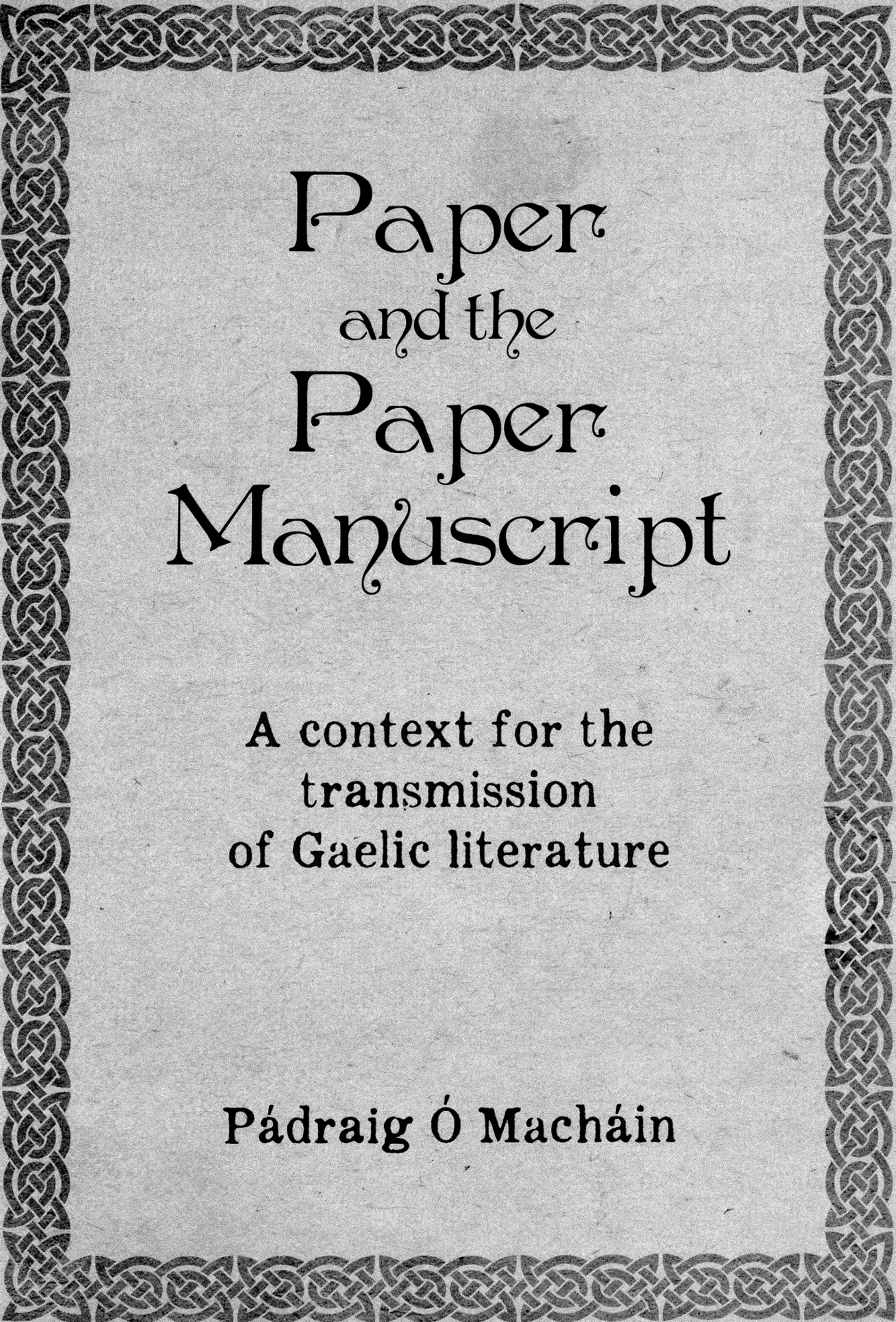
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# Paper and the Paper Manuscript

A context for the  
transmission  
of Gaelic literature

Pádraig Ó Macháin

**Paper  
and the  
Paper Manuscript**

*A context for the transmission  
of Gaelic literature*

edited by

*Pádraig Ó Macháin*

Cló Torna  
2019



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## *On the origins of the Ulster manuscript tradition, 1690–1800: some initial observations*

NIOCLÁS MAC CATHMHAOIL<sup>1</sup>

After the collapse of the aristocratic Gaelic order in the seventeenth century, the traditional hereditary learned families became increasingly redundant under the new emerging political dispensation. By this time, a branch of the Ó Ruanadha family who were poets to the Mág Aonghasa chieftains of Iveagh, Co. Down, seems to have stopped writing poetry.<sup>2</sup> Likewise the Ó hEachaidhéin family, associated with Clonduff parish in Co. Down<sup>3</sup> had abandoned poetry by 1681,<sup>4</sup> and the branch of the Mac an Bhaird family who had resided in Farney, Co. Monaghan, since the fifteenth century fell silent around 1690.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile the Uí Eódhasa and Uí Chorcraín poets of Fermanagh had also fallen silent.

The demise of the poetic family of Ó Gnímh of County Antrim illustrates well the effect of the political changes of the seventeenth century on the learned families of north-east Ireland, as in the country at large. A case in point is that of manuscript collector Edward Lhuyd who visited Bangor in 1700, where he met with:

... one Eoin Agniw [i.e. Ó Gnímh] whose ancestors had been hereditary poets, for many generations, to the family of the O Neals; but the lands they held thereby being taken away from his father, he had forsaken the Muses and betaken himself to the plow: so we made an easy purchase of about a dozen ancient manuscripts on parchment.<sup>6</sup>

Given this fall of the traditional custodians of learning the future may have seemed bleak for Gaelic letters in east Ulster, as well as in the rest of Ireland. The eighteenth century, however, saw a blossoming in Gaelic writing unrivalled, in terms of volume at least, by any other century in Irish history. This bears testimony to the increase in vernacular writing during this period, for while perhaps four hundred manuscripts from the entire period before 1700 are still extant,<sup>7</sup> we have today around one thousand manuscripts which survive from the eighteenth century.<sup>8</sup> The largest portion of these eighteenth-century manuscripts originate in Munster, and a number of significant papers and monographs have been written on the southern tradition, the foremost of which are Ó Conchúir's *Scríobhaithe Chorcaí* (1982), Ó Madagáin's *An Ghaeilge i Luimneach 1700–1900* (1974) and Ní Urdáil's *The scribe in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Ireland: motivations and milieu* (2000).

The late northern manuscripts have not received the same attention: the most comprehensive general study to date on this area is that of Ó Baoill,<sup>9</sup> while important contributions have been made by Ó Mórdha and Ní Mhunghaile on the Meath scribal tradition.<sup>10</sup> Recent contributions by Charles Dillon on poet Séamas Dall Mac Cuarta's (c. 1647–1733) use of the *trí rainn agus amhrán* ('three quatrains and a verse') genre,<sup>11</sup> and on the textual transmission of Mac Cuarta's

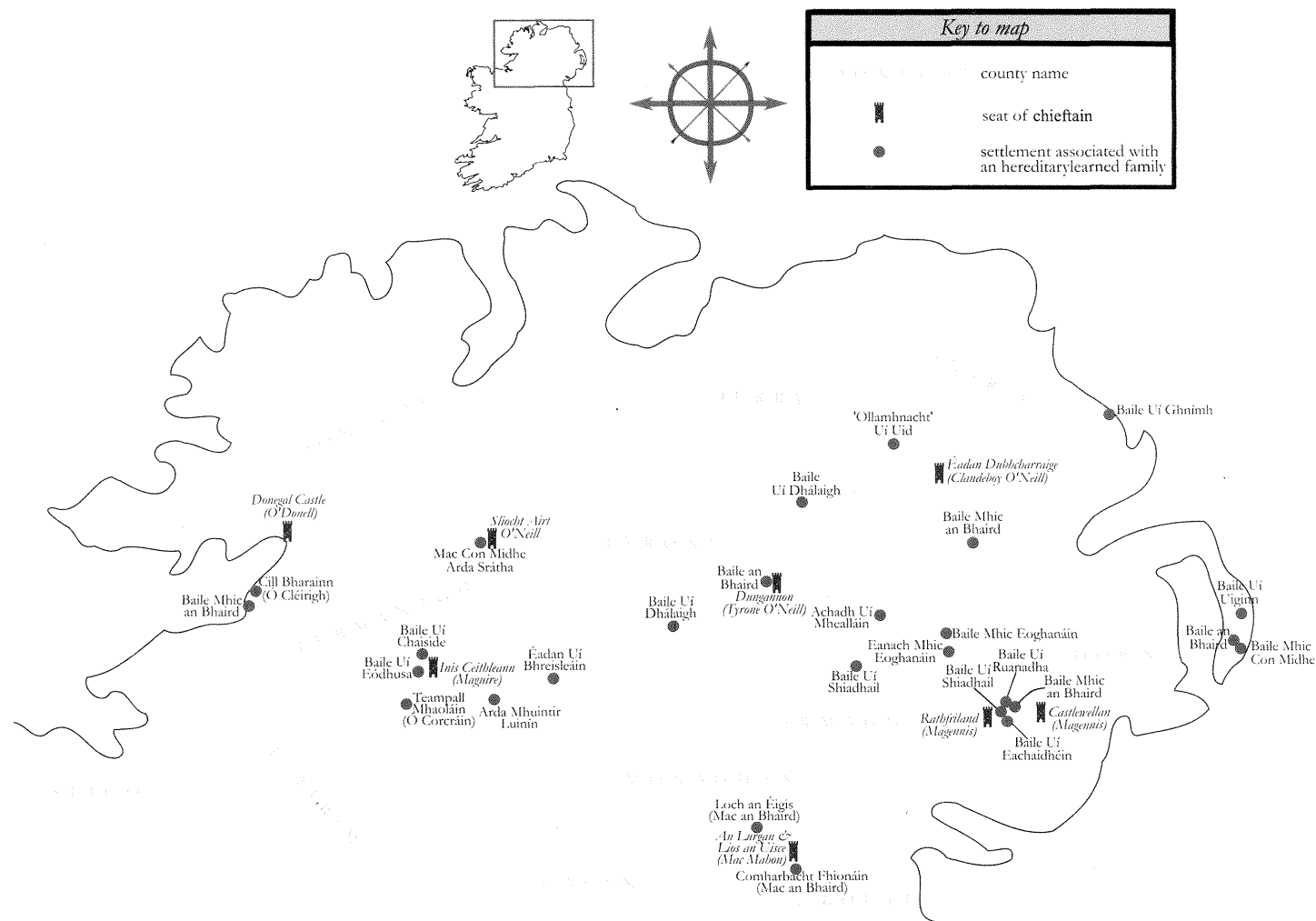


Fig. 1. Some aspects of the hereditary learned tradition in Ulster, c. 1550.

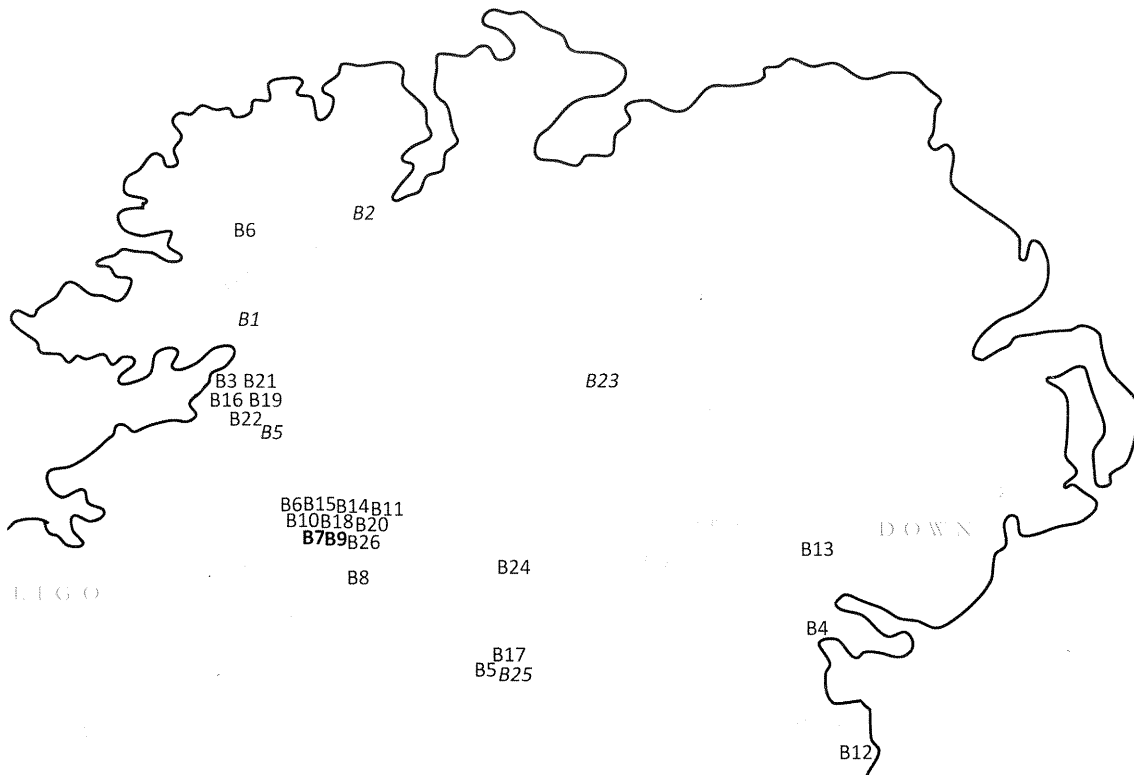


Fig. 2. Ulster MSS, 1700–1715: B. In this and the following distribution maps, an entry in bold type indicates definite provenance, normal type indicates inferred provenance, and italic type indicates that the provenance indicated is tentative.

poems,<sup>12</sup> have opened up new avenues of investigation on Ulster's most renowned poet of the post-classical era. A further article by Dillon on the South-East-Ulster poets in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries deals primarily with their outlook on the English language, while also offering valuable insights into this poetic tradition as a whole.<sup>13</sup> Hughes' long article in *Armagh History and Society* gives a detailed general introduction to this subject,<sup>14</sup> presenting a valuable overview of its poets in particular, while Ní Uallacháin's recent important monograph<sup>15</sup> is broader again in its sweep, providing an outline of the Oriel musical and literary tradition as a whole.

A great deal of work remains to be done, however, on late northern manuscripts, and the present paper aims to contribute to addressing this shortfall. My second aim is to re-consider the widely-held view that

eighteenth-century Gaelic literary culture was a 'survival' of the earlier aristocratic literary tradition. This view holds that the poets of the period had become 'residuary legatees of an age-old tradition...'<sup>16</sup> after the so-called collapse of Gaelic Ireland in the seventeenth century pushed 'the literary culture downwards'.<sup>17</sup> Such discourse of continuity advocates a passing of the literary torch in a top-down fashion from the old, official, learned families to the peasant scribes and writers of the 1650–1850 period. This interpretation may have been influenced by post-colonialist or nationalist concerns, for, if it is accepted that the Gaelic cultural continuum was not broken up by the conquest of the seventeenth century, the influence of the English on Irish culture is minimised. The idea of a Gaelic cultural continuum is not unfounded but, as discussed below, it cannot

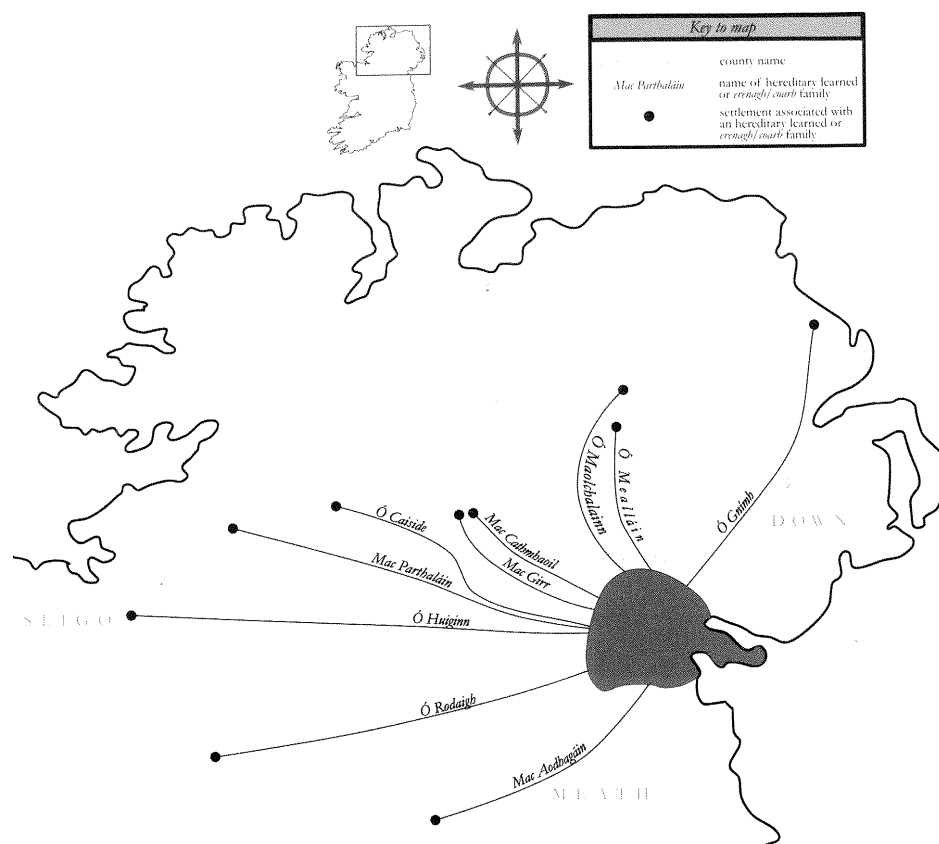


Fig. 3. Movement of hereditary learned families into South-East Ulster c. 1610- c. 1670.

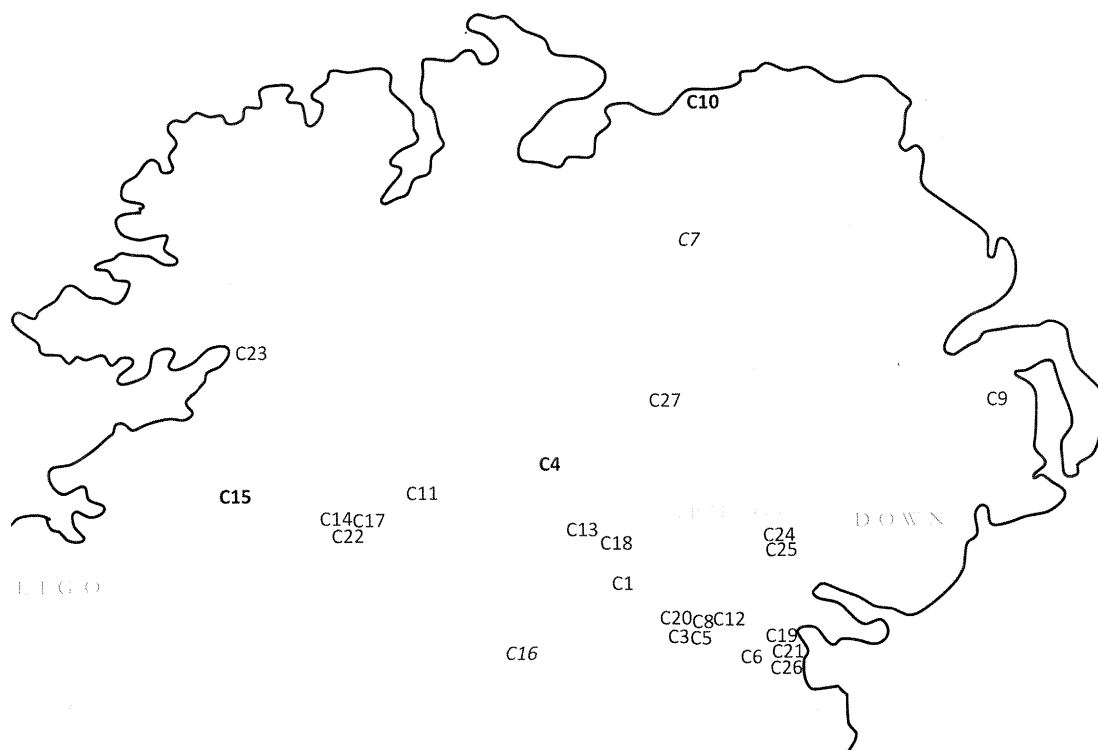


Fig. 4. Ulster MSS, 1715-1750: C.



be presumed that the demotic Gaelic literary culture of the 1690–1800 period was extensively linked to the elite tradition of the earlier period.<sup>18</sup> A review of the manuscripts and scribes from the Ulster and Louth area raises some further questions regarding the perception of its contemporary literature as being ‘residual’ – or at least as being a residue of the Bardic poetic tradition – and reveals a more nuanced relationship with the older ‘official’ literature and its practitioners.

### *The manuscripts, their scribes and milieu*

This body of 130 manuscripts and fragments comprises approximately twenty thousand paper pages of various dimensions. Most are quartos 15 × 9 cm, though they range in size up to 30.5 × 18.2 cm. Some of those with larger pages were written for patrons,<sup>19</sup> but it is difficult to establish the original size of various manuscripts due to later trimming.<sup>20</sup> The manuscripts average 213 pages, though they vary in length from 42 pages<sup>21</sup> to 522.<sup>22</sup> Some are carefully written and presented, with running-titles, attempts at ornamentation of initials and projecting majuscules, wide margins, and uniform spaces between the lines.<sup>23</sup> Other *boilg an tsoláir*<sup>24</sup> miscellanies were written untidily and sometimes lengthwise, with as much material crammed onto each page as possible. Overall, the unitary manuscripts in this group make up just over 6 thousand pages, leaving 15 thousand pages to the *boilg an tsoláir*. These codices contain a great variety of texts: ranging from saints’ lives, catechisms, theological treatises, missals, charms, folk cures and prayer books, allegorical stories, Ulster cycle stories, other romances,<sup>25</sup> contemporary or near contemporary poetry, *Fianaíocht* or Ossianic stories, and narrative Ossianic poetry above all.

Unlike their learned counterparts from

previous centuries, very few of the scribes from our period came from the traditional hereditary literate families who had once flourished under the Gaelic patronage system one of the most remarkable things about the post-Classical MS tradition in Ireland is how few of its scribes come from the hereditary learned castes.<sup>26</sup> This withdrawal of the learned families from literary activity, however, happened to different extents and at different speeds according to the area. Many of the North-Connacht and South-West Ulster scribes and poets of the early eighteenth century came from the old learned families, such as Peadar Ó Maolchonaire, Pádraig Ó Cuirnín, Cú Choigríche Ó Duibhgeannáin, Éamonn Ó Caiside, Seafraidh Ó Ruairc, Pádraig Óg Mac an Bhaird, Fearghal Óg mac Phádraig Óig Mhic an Bhaird, Tomás Ó Cléirigh and Cathal Ó Luinnín. The residuality of the literary tradition in this area – both in the content of the manuscripts and in the family background of its practitioners – was influenced by many factors, the foremost of which was the presence there of a strong written literary tradition in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>27</sup> It was in North Connacht and South-West Ulster that important texts such as the *Annals of the Four Masters*, Dubhaltach Mac Fírbhisigh’s genealogical compendia and the new recensions of the *Leabhar Gabhála*, ‘Book of Invasions’, were produced in and around the middle third of the seventeenth century. The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were something of a *belle époque* in Bardic poetry, and three of the great poets of this time, Eochaidh Ó hEódhusa († 1617), Fearghal Óg Mac an Bhaird (c. 1550–c.1616) and Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (1550–1591) were from the North Connaught/South-West Ulster area.

As can be seen in the distribution maps, the late paper manuscript tradition in

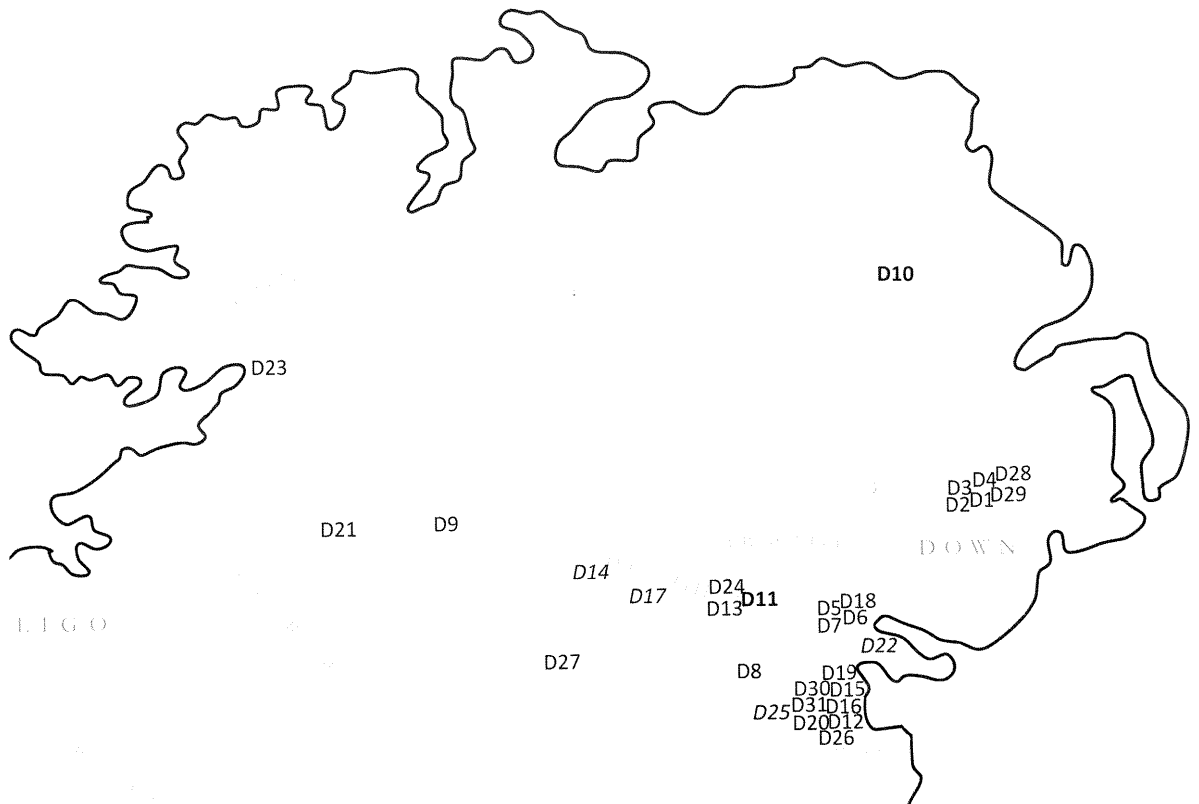


Fig. 5. Ulster MSS, 1750-1775: D.

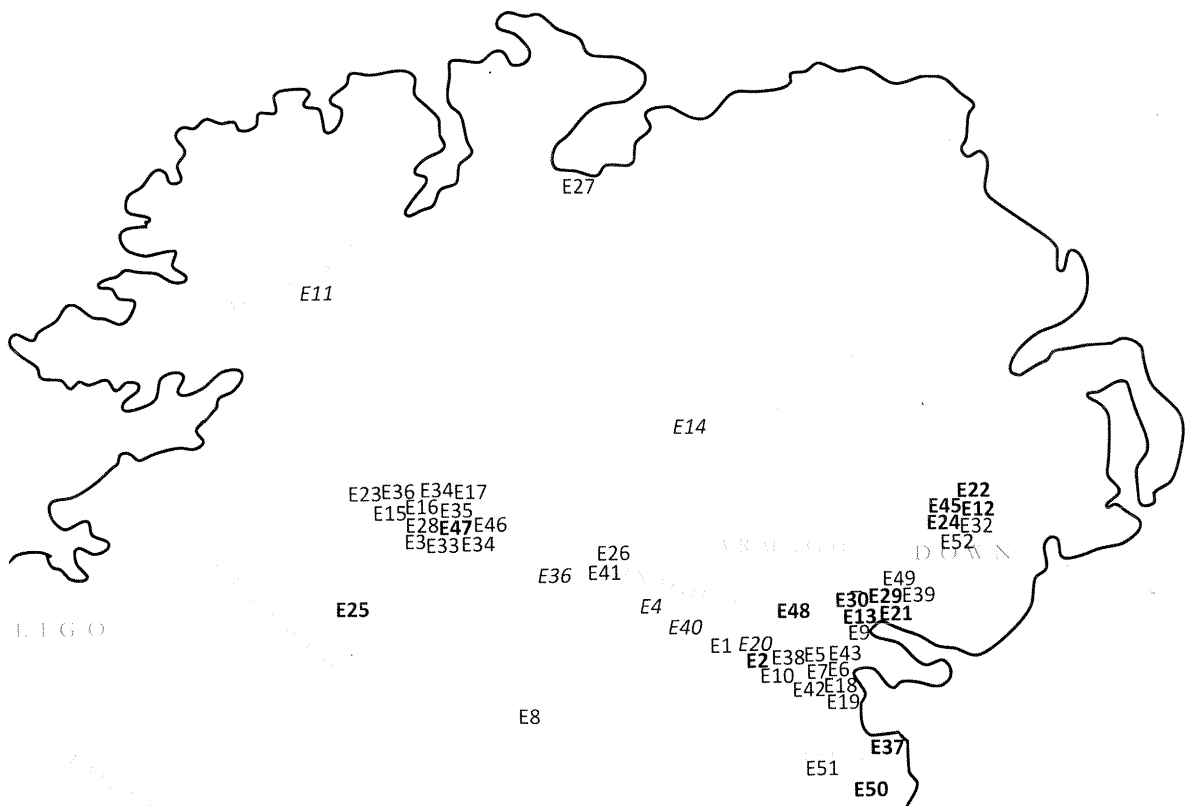


Fig. 6. Ulster MSS, 1775-1800: E.

South-East Ulster gathers pace at a later date than it did in Fermanagh / West Cavan, and there was no illustrious literary scribal tradition in the former area from which scribes and poets could draw. The contrast between this area and North Connaught / South-West Ulster prompted Ó Fiaich to posit that the late flourishing of Gaelic letters in South-East Ulster was influenced by migration:

It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that South-East Ulster had no poetic tradition before the seventeenth century. Insofar as Ulster had a tradition of learning at all before 1600, it was to be found in the west of the province rather than the east, and especially in the Counties Donegal and Fermanagh . . . And then quite suddenly the centre of gravity of northern learning shifts to South-East Ulster . . . What was the reason for this transfer? As it occurred from the middle of the seventeenth century on, the first inclination is to give Cromwell some of the credit for it . . . The appearance quite suddenly of so many poets in an area which had never been noted for its learning before, leaves one with the strong suspicion however that the families to which they belonged were imports from other regions. In fact when you examine the names they bore, not a single one among them was native to the area.<sup>29</sup>

A lot more primary source documents have been published since Ó Fiaich wrote this, and so we are now able to dispute his 'transfer theory', for example, two of the families that Ó Fiaich references were in Monaghan since the fifteenth century: those of Mac Cuarta and of Mac Cumhaigh, who were possibly Mc Coys, as one early nineteenth-century scribe stated.<sup>30</sup> If so, then they were one and the same as the Mac Aodha Gallowglass family based in Monaghan in the fifteenth century.

It cannot be disputed that there was a movement of 'learned' families into South-

East Ulster by the 1660s, but, as with Eoin Agnew, they must have 'taken themselves to the plough', or to some other means of making a living, for there is little evidence in the manuscripts that they persisted with Gaelic learning into the eighteenth century. As the maps in this paper show, the 'centre of gravity' would shift evermore to South-East Ulster throughout the course of the century but the reason for this – discussed below – had more to do with wider socio-economic factors than it had with influence from old learned families.

The writing of Gaelic manuscripts in Ulster in the eighteenth century seems to have been largely a side-line activity of first- and second-generation literate men who were occupied in professions that required a degree of literacy: at least eight and perhaps as many as twelve of our scribes were priests,<sup>31</sup> and at least five of them were known as teachers.<sup>32</sup> Ní Shéaghda has noted, however, that almost every scribe of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spent at least some time teaching,<sup>33</sup> and there may be reason to suggest that more than five of our scribes combined the role of copyist and teacher. It seems possible that the scribes wrote some of their manuscripts to read aloud as they went on their teaching circuits, and so combined scribal work, performance and teaching. Indeed, it is very important to acknowledge the social element of the late manuscript culture, because the ultimate function of many of these manuscripts was to be read out loud.

There is little evidence to suggest that any of the scribes depended on copying activity as their main means of income, or indeed that there were many major patrons in the area who were eager to pay for such work. Some of the manuscripts were written expressly for patrons,<sup>34</sup> and it is possible that others were written with a view that they might be later purchased.<sup>35</sup> In keeping,

however, with the general trend throughout the country in the eighteenth century,<sup>36</sup> most of the manuscripts were likely written for the scribes' own use, or partly for the use of their friends, relations and acquaintances.<sup>37</sup> This exchange and loaning of manuscripts between scribes helped create local networks of Gaelic literati, which may be compared to the contemporary Dublin-centred Ó Neachtain circle, albeit on a smaller scale.

### *Subject matter of the manuscripts*

The northern scribes of this era had little access to or interest in either *seanchas* ('pseudo-historical') or syllabic bardic poems. This traditional or 'residual' bardic aristocratic tradition found little purchase in the South-East Ulster and Louth tradition, but, relatively speaking, was popular enough amongst the Dublin-based Ó Neachtain circle, whose tastes were perhaps more scholastic and antiquarian than their scribal counterparts in rural Ulster and Munster.<sup>38</sup> The comparative abundance of these older poems in the Ó Neachtain circle manuscripts may also be due to the fact that many of the valuable, older manuscripts containing these texts had found their way to the Dublin area by the beginning of the eighteenth century. This does not mean that there were no manuscripts containing bardic poetry available to the scribes of the area, for the Mac Mahon *duanaire* ('poem-book'), RIA MS 24 P 4, written in 1687 by Pádraic Mac Oghannan,<sup>39</sup> was in the possession of the Down scribe Pádraig Ó Brinn around 1795, and later belonged to Art Mac Bionaid of South Armagh,<sup>40</sup> but it seems that neither these scribes, or any other, copied any of its bardic poems.

Some contemporary South-East Ulster and Louth poets did write praise poetry for remaining members of the landed Gaelic class, but this never became popular amongst the

region's scribes during the eighteenth century, filling around forty pages at the most in the manuscripts, and amounting to less than 0.5% of the overall material copied in this area in the eighteenth century, and even less in the West-Ulster tradition. The same cannot be said, however, of the laments written on the deaths of these Gaelic noblemen and the demise of their abodes, for, excepting the ubiquitous *Laoithe Fianaíochta* ('Fenian Lays'), these laments were the most popular of all secular poems in the manuscripts. The scribes seemed to have had little interest in historical prose either: by far the most popular texts were the contemporary or near-contemporary *Mac na Michomhairle* and *Comhairle Mhic Clámha*, followed by pious texts such as *Párrthas an Anna*, various catechisms, sermons, and *Scathán Shacramuinte na hAithridhe*. It should be noted, however, that some copies of the *Leabhar Gabhála* and other historical texts were made in the Fermanagh / West-Cavan area around the beginning of the eighteenth century.

### *Conclusion*

This emergence of popular or 'demotic' literature in the area cannot simply be the result of the influence of traditional learned families, or the old hereditary tradition being 'pushed down' in the seventeenth century. A down-up, or 'history from below' approach might be adapted, considering the wider socio-economic factors, not least the transition from 'oligoliteracy' to 'universal literacy' in the c. 1600–1900 period. Across Europe the rise of literacy depended heavily on economic functions, and the need for literacy mostly derived from urban commercial activity.<sup>41</sup> The South-East Ulster and Louth area, in contrast with western Ulster, contained some of the busiest trading

towns in the north of Ireland, and these towns, especially Newry and Dundalk, were primarily populated by the Gaelic Irish.<sup>42</sup> The potential for social advancement into merchant and artisan roles in these towns fuelled the demand for literacy in their Irish-speaking hinterlands. This demand supported a class of Irish-speaking hedge school teachers, whose primary job was to teach English, but who also composed poetry and transcribed manuscripts.<sup>43</sup> It seems that knowledge of written Irish came at least partly as a by-product of the increase of literacy in English, with Irish being the second written language of many scribes of the later eighteenth century: this is illustrated in the English-based orthography in manuscripts such as RIA 23 A 5 (Pádraig Ó Híethr, 1793).

In this there is a striking parallel with the Swahili manuscript tradition in the Arabic script that started to emerge in the second half of the seventeenth century. In these manuscripts, as in late Icelandic and Finnish<sup>44</sup> manuscripts, types of literature came to be written down that were previously attested only in the oral tradition,<sup>45</sup> and were therefore

independent of the direct transmission of an historical written tradition. Similarly, the preference of later Irish scribes for texts that resonated with contemporary circumstances, and their eschewal of older literary modes exhibits more active agency than earlier scribes who were bound by patrons' demands.

The advent of popular literacy in Ulster helped fuel the burgeoning demotic written literary tradition in Irish amongst an emerging lower middle class, fostered by a transient socio-cultural and linguistic microclimate that was favourable to the cultivation of indigenous writing. If a 'transfer' occurred in this literary activity, it was not all 'top-down', from the fallen aristocratic learned and church-warden families, but was also 'down-up', whereby a newly literate Gaelic-speaking people started recording a contemporary popular literary tradition. The paradox in this is that by promoting literate knowledge of the English language, the advent of popular literacy would eventually make redundant the same demotic Gaelic literate culture that it originally facilitated.

NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Ulster University, Magee Campus, Derry.
- <sup>2</sup> The Down branch of this family likely lived at Baile Uí Ruanadha (Ballyrone, par. Drumballrone, bar. Iveagh Upper, Lower Half, co. Down), see A.J. Hughes, 'Land acquisition by Gaelic Bardic Poets: Insights from place-names and other sources', *Ainm* 6 (1994) 74–102: 86. The last poem by an Ó Ruanadha on one of the Aonghasa chieftains seems to be *Mé féin m'éanbhráighe-se ar Aodh* on Aodh mac Domhnaill Mag Aonghasa (fl. 1585). A lightly edited copy of this poem is found in Damian Mc Manus and Eoghan Ó Raghallaigh (ed.), *A Bardic Miscellany* (Dublin 2010) § 324.
- <sup>3</sup> It is possible that they lived at Baile Uí Eachaidhéin (Ballyhaughian, par. Clonduff, bar. Iveagh Upper, Lower Half, co. Down).
- <sup>4</sup> When the Welsh antiquarian Edward Lhuyd came to Glenavy in Co. Antrim in 1699, he met a priest called 'Irial o Hachien' of whom he wrote 'has old MSS. His brother was ye greatest poet in Ireland & he has his MSS as also his uncle's' (J. L. Campbell, 'The tour of Edward Lhuyd in Ireland in 1699 and 1700', *Celtica* 5 (1960) 218–28: 220). It is possible that the brother and uncle referred to here are Ruaidhrí Óg and Lughaidh Ó hEachaidhéin, some of whose poems are found in *Leabhar Cloinne Aodha Buidhe*, which was written in 1680 (ed. Tadhg Ó Donnchadha (Baile Átha Cliath 1931)), or Cian Ó hEachaidhéin who wrote a lament for Aodh mac Einrí mac Eoghain Rua Ó Néill (†1660), for which see *A bardic miscellany* § 451.
- <sup>5</sup> The last member of this family to practice poetry was most likely Diarmaid mac Laoisigh Meic an Bhaird (fl. 1685). He may have lived in Kilkit, par. Aughnacullen, bar. Cremorne, Co. Monaghan (S. Ó Dufáigh, 'Comhairle mhic Clamha ó Achadh na muilleann', *Clogher Record* 5/3 (1965) 307–347: 315).
- <sup>6</sup> Campbell, 'The tour of Edward Lhuyd', 221. Two of these manuscripts may be found in MSS TCD 1337 (H.3.18) and TCD 1266 (H.4.25).
- <sup>7</sup> Pádraig de Brún, 'Gan teannta buird ná binse: Scríobhnaithe na Gaeilge, 1650–1800', *Comhar* 13/11 (1972) 15–20: 16.
- <sup>8</sup> Brian Ó Cuív, 'Ireland's Manuscript Heritage', *Éire-Ireland* 19 (Spring 1984) 87–110: 103.
- <sup>9</sup> Colm Ó Baoill, 'Scríobhnaithe agus Saothrú an Léinn i dTuaisceart na hÉireann ó c. 1300 i Leith: Tús Taighde', *Léann* 1 (2007) 77–91.
- <sup>10</sup> See Lesa Ní Mhúngaile, 'Scribal networks and manuscript circulation in Meath during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries', *Ríocht na Midhe* 22 (2011) 131–50, and Séamus Ó Mórdha, 'Manuscripts and scribal traditions in Meath', *Ríocht na Midhe* 15 (2004) 66–82.
- <sup>11</sup> Charles Dillon, 'Séan Cuacha: múnla, meadaracht agus meafaracht i bhfilíocht Shéamais Mhic Cuarta', *Eighteenth Century Ireland* 27 (2012) 30–52.
- <sup>12</sup> Charles Dillon, 'The compositions of Séamas Dall Mac Cuarta in contemporary manuscript sources', *Éigse* 38 (2013) 104–130.
- <sup>13</sup> Art Hughes, 'Gaelic poets and scribes of the South Armagh hinterland in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries', in A. J. Hughes and William Nolan (ed.), *Armagh history and society* (Dublin 2001) 505–58.
- <sup>14</sup> Pádraigín Ní Uallacháin, *A hidden Ulster: people, songs and traditions of Oriel* (Dublin 2003).
- <sup>15</sup> Richard A. Breatnach, 'The Lady and the King: a theme of Irish Literature', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 42 (1967) 321–36: 324.
- <sup>16</sup> Rachel Bromwich, 'The continuity of the Gaelic tradition in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Yorkshire Celtic Studies* 4 (1947–48) 5; Proinsias Mac Cána, 'Irish Literary Tradition', in Brian Ó Cuív (ed.), *A view of the Irish language* (Dublin 1969) 35–46: 45.
- <sup>17</sup> For a summary of recent discussion on the links between 'high' and 'low' culture in the Early Modern period, see Peter Burke, *Popular culture in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed., Farnham 2009) 7–15.
- <sup>18</sup> Such as NLI G 190 (28 × 16 cm), written by Peadar Ó Doirín for 'Ó Crolugha', and UCD M 11 (20 × 15 cm), which was written by Eoin Ó Mearáin for Micheal Fleming.
- <sup>19</sup> As with the fragment MS Liv. 12065 (ii).
- <sup>20</sup> MS UCD M 11 (Muiris Ó Gormáin, c. 1734).
- <sup>21</sup> MS BF PL 43 (Séamus Mac Póilín, c. 1762).
- <sup>22</sup> MSS MN M 103 (Ardghaoil Ó hAnluain, 1764) and Gal. de H. 20 (Pádraig Ó Pronntaigh, 1762).
- <sup>23</sup> E.g. RIA 23 A 45 (Muiris Ó Gormáin, 1745), FLK 39 (Brian Ó Cathaláin et. al., c. 1790) and Camb. Add. 3085b (Matthias McGill, c. 1746), RIA 24 I 23 (Patricius Dealy?, c. 1723).
- <sup>24</sup> For discussion on the Oriel prose tradition, see Seosamh Watson, *Mac na Michomhairle* (Dublin 1979) 11–47; Ruairí Ó hUiginn, 'Some late tales of the Ulster Cycle', in *Celebrating sixty years of Celtic Studies at Uppsala University* (Uppsala 2013) 99–111.
- <sup>25</sup> For this, see Pádraig Ó Macháin, "'A Llebraib Imdaib'": cleachtadh agus pátrúnacht an léinn, agus déanamh na lámhscríbhinní', in Ruairí Ó hUiginn (ed.), *Oidhreacht na Lámhscríbhinní* (Léachtaí Cholm Cille 34, Má Nuad 2004) 148–78: 157–8, 169.
- <sup>26</sup> See, for example, S. P. Ó Mórdha, 'Some aspects of the Literary tradition of the Bréifne-Fermanagh area', *Bréifne* 6 (1982) 18–56: 37–8; Pádraig Ó Macháin, 'The poetry of Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn: themes and sources', in Pádraigín Riggs (ed.), *Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn: historical and literary context* (ITS Subsidiary Series 21, London 2010) 55–87: 74–5.



- <sup>28</sup> For a key to manuscripts referenced in this and further maps see Appendix below. A fully coloured circle in these maps indicates a certain or near certain location for the writing of a manuscript, a circle with a solid border indicates a probable location, and a circle with a dashed border indicates a tentative location.
- <sup>29</sup> Tomás Ó Fiaich, 'The political and social background of the Ulster Poets', *Léachtaí Cholm Cille* 1 (1970) 23–33: 27–8.
- <sup>30</sup> NLI MS G 200b, p. 53, written in 1823 by local scribe Pádraig Mhac Gallóglaith from Dundalk.
- <sup>31</sup> Cormac Ó Cuan, Feidhlimadh Ó Néill, Séamas Mac Póilín, Pádraig Ó Brinn, Brian Ó Cathaláin and Eoin Ó Gribeán.
- <sup>32</sup> Muiris Ó Gormáin, Peadar Ó Doirín, Pádraig Ó Brinn, Uilliam Mac Néill.
- <sup>33</sup> Nessa Ní Shéaghda, 'Gairmeacha beatha roinnt scríobhaithe ón 18ú agus ón 19ú Céad', *Celtica* 21 (1990) 567–75: 567.
- <sup>34</sup> These being Liv. 12052 for Semas O Ceallachan (Cormac Mac Cuan, 1728), Liv. 12065 for Ardghal Mac Mathghamhna, (Cormac Mac Cuan, 1723), RIA 24 L 18b for Feidhlimidh Ó Néill (Cormac Mac Cuan, 1724), Ox 20 for John Mc Donnell (Pádraig Ó Pronntaigh, 1733), NLI G 190 for Saain Mac Crolugha (Peadar Ó Doirín, c. 1740?), UCD M 11 for Mich[ael] Fleming (Eoghan Ó Mearáin, 1737) and BL Add 18749 for Samuel Coulter (Donnchadh Mac Oireachtaigh, 1792).
- <sup>35</sup> For example, the care taken in the penmanship and layout of MN M 103 (Ardghaoil Ó Hanluain, 1764) and NYPL 25689 (Pádraig Ó Hethir, 1798) may indicate that they were intended as presentation manuscripts.
- <sup>36</sup> For this, see Breandán Ó Buachalla, 'Eighteenth-Century Irish Manuscripts', in Bernadette Cunningham and Siobhan Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Treasures of the Royal Irish Academy Library* (Dublin 2009) 139–59: 145.
- <sup>37</sup> See, for example MS NLI G 361, a copy of Keating's *Eochairsciath an Aifrinn* (1652), 'An Explanatory Defence of the Mass', copied by Richard Tipper in 1713, which came into the possession of Muiris Ó Gormáin, who then lent it to James Pulleine (i.e. Séamas Mac Póilín), who likely borrowed from it when composing his Irish sermons (Cainneach Ó Maonaigh, *Seannmónta Chúiige Uladh* (Baile Átha Cliath 1965) xi). Other instances of scribes writing for and borrowing from acquaintances are evidenced in MS BL Eg. 128 f. 44b (Muiris Ó Gormáin from Eoghan Ó Mearáin), Camb. Add. 3085 f. 69v i (Matthias Mac Giolla for his son Eoin) and MS Chicago 3, p. 106 (Feidhlim Ó Néill for Seamis O Raghallaigh).
- <sup>38</sup> For some examples of Bardic Poetry copied by these scribes, see mss RIA 23 L 32, pp. 48–52 (Richard Tipper); 23 D 9, pp. 239–42 (Richard Tipper); TCD 1360 (Aodh Ó Dálaigh); TCD 1361 (Tadhg Ó Neachtain). For some copies of seanchas poems by these scribes, see RIA 23 G 8, pp. 39–119 (Tadhg Ó Neachtain); RIA 23 M 46, pp. 10–12 (Richard Tipper); RIA 23 A 40 pp. 160–77, 331–7 (Seon Mac Solaidh).
- <sup>40</sup> Mary E. Byrne, *Catalogue of Irish manuscripts in the Royal Irish Academy: Fasciculus III* (Dublin 1928) 272–3.
- <sup>41</sup> Martyn Lyons, *History of reading and writing in the Western World* (New York 2010) 88, 93–5.
- <sup>42</sup> William Smyth, 'Ireland a colony: settlement implications of the revolution in military-administrative, urban and ecclesiastical structures: c. 1550–1730', in Terry Barry (ed.), *A history of settlement in Ireland* (London 2000) 158–87: 170; and James H. Johnson, 'The two "Irelands" at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century', in Nicholas Stephens and Robin E. Glasscock (ed.), *Irish geographical studies in honour of E. Estyn Evans* (Belfast 1970) 224–44: 245.
- <sup>43</sup> For this practice in the wider context, see Louis Cullen, 'Patrons, teachers and literacy in Irish', in Mary Daly and David Dickson (ed.), *The origins of popular literacy in Ireland: language change and educational development 1700–1920* (Dublin 1990) 15–44: 17.
- <sup>44</sup> Petri Lauerma, 'Finnish revivalist movements and the development of literary Finnish', in Anna Kuusman and M. J. Driscoll (ed.), *White field, black seeds: Nordic literary practices in the long nineteenth century* Studia Fennica Litteraria 7 (Helsinki 2013) 158–68: 163–4.
- <sup>45</sup> Ridder Samsom, 'Swahili manuscript culture', *Manuscript Studies: newsletter* 4 (2011) 68–77: 69.

## Appendix

### Abbreviations:

Adv.	Advocates Library, Edinburgh
BF Lav.	Laverty manuscripts, St. Malachy's College, Belfast
BF PL	McAdam and Bryson manuscripts, Public Library, Belfast
BL Add.	Additional manuscripts, British Library, London
BL Eg.	Egerton manuscripts, British Library, London
Camb.	Cambridge University Library
CE	Coláiste Eoin
Chic.	D'Alton manuscripts, Chicago University Library
Cor. ÓM	Cnuasach Uí Mhurchú, University College Cork
Don.	Donellan manuscript, Ó Fiaich Library and Archive, Armagh
FLK	Franciscan Library, Killiney (now held in University College Dublin library)
Gal. de H.	de Híde manuscripts, James Hardiman Library, National University of Ireland, Galway
KI	Kings Inn Library, Dublin
Liv.	Mayer manuscripts, Liverpool City Museum
MN	National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Morris	Morris Manuscripts, University College Dublin
NLI	National Library of Ireland
NY CC	New York Catholic Club
NYPL	New York Public Library
Ox	Manuscripts in Oxford Libraries
QUB	Queen's University Belfast
RIA	Royal Irish Academy, Dublin
TCD	Trinity College Dublin
UCD	University College Dublin

Manuscripts referenced / key to maps. An asterisk after a MS number in the following tables indicates that it was written by multiple authors.

<u>SCRIBE</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>YEAR(S)</u>
Ó Duind, Domhnall	B1	RIA 23 N 27	1714
Mac Giolla Comhaill	B2	TCD 1354	1704-18
Ó Domhnaill, M	B3	RIA 23 M 12	1706-06
Ó Cathalán, L	B4	FLK A 18	1710-11
Ó Raghallaigh, E	B5	CE 18	1709-10
Ó Luínín, C	B6	NLI G 448	1711-12
Mag Uidhir, Semus	B7	RIA Cvi2	1715-16
Mac Gabhráin, Seán	B8	TCD 1297	1716
Mag Uidhir, Semus	B9	RIA 23 O 41	?

<u>SCRIBE</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>YEAR(S)</u>
Mag Uidhir, Semus		B10 RIA C vi 1*	1720-24
Mag Uidhir, Semus		B11 RIA 23 N 6	1721-22
Riaghalla, Pattraig		B12 RIA 24 P 42	1722-22
Mac Cuan, Cormac		B13 RIA 24 L 18a	1724
Mag Uidhir, Semus		B14 RIA 23 B 3	?
Mag Uidhir, Semus		B15 RIA 23 K 48	?
Ó Domhnaill, M	B16	BF PL 42	1706
Ó Raghallaigh, E	B17	Camb. Add. 4205	1701-02
Mag Uidhir, Séamus	B20	RIA 23 M 42	
Ó Domhnaill, M	B21	RIA 23 M 3	1706
Ó Domhnaill, M	B22	RIA 23 M 40*	1706
	B23	MN F11	-1726
Ó Casaide, Enrí	B24	Chic. 2	1703
Ó Raghallaigh, D	B25	TCD 1383*	1704
Mag Uidhir, Séamus	B26	RIA 23 A 15	1712
	C1	RIA 24 I 23	1725-34
Ó Mearáin, E	C3	Morris. 11	1737
Mac Gear, S	C4	Adv. 72.2.5	1738
Ó Gormáin, M	C5	RIA 23 A 45	1745
Ó Hóidh, T	C6	NLI G 231	1747
Ó Canin, P	C7	TCD 1342	1747-48
Ó Gormáin, Muiris	C8	BL Eg. 128	1748
Mac Giolla, Matthias	C9	Camb. Add. 3085*	1748-50
Ó Brinn, Searlus	C10	NLI G 35	1747-50
Mag Uidhir, T	C11	Ox 19	1749
Ó Cathalan, Labhras	C12	FLK A 31*	1718-29c
	C13	TCD 1379	1727
Mag Uidhir, Séamus	C14	RIA 23 K 45*	1746
Mag Uidhir, Semus	C15	NLI G 167	1727-36
Ó Raghallaigh, A	C16	NLI G 128	1728
Mag Uidhir, Séamus	C17	BL Eg. 192	1729
Mac Mathgh., S	C18	RIA 23 H 36	1731-33
Ó Pronntaigh, P	C19	Morris. 7	1732
Ó Gormáin, Muiris	C20	Morris. 19	1734
Ó Pronntaigh, P	C21	Ox 20	1736
Mac Aodha, C	C22	NY CC	1736
Mac Suibhne, R	C23	FLK A 41*	1742
Mac Cuan, Cormac	C24	Liv. 12065	1723
Mac Cuan, Cormac	C25	Liv. 12052 b	1728
Ó Pronntaigh, P	C26	Morris 8	1733
Ó Néill, Feidhlimidh	C27	Chic. 3	1740

<u>SCRIBE</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>YEAR(S)</u>
Mac Póilín, S	D1	BF PL 43	1762
Mac Póilín, S	D3	RIA 24 L 18a	c. 1760
Mac Póilín, S	D4	BF PL 36	?t
Ó Doirnín, Peadar	D5	MN 4 C 1	c. 1765
Ó Doirnín, Peadar	D6	Don. 2*	?
Ó Doirnín, Peadar	D7	BF Lav. 12*	?
Ó Conainn, Aodh	D8	RIA 23 I 37	1762
Ó Doailén, P	D9	UCD G 5	1773
Mac Cloy, Daniel	D10	KI 5	1755
Ó Cathalán, Brian	D11	FLK A 39*	1773-75
Ó Pronntaigh, P	D12	BL Eg. 172	1759
	D13	RIA 23 I 11	1773
Ó Tighernan, T	D14	RIA 23 D 24*	1774-75
Ó Pronntaigh, P	D15	RIA 23 A 10*	?
Ó Pronntaigh, P	D16	RIA 24 P 7*	1761
	D17	BF PL 32	c. 1759
Ó Duirnín, Peadar	D18	NLI G 190	
Ó Pronntaigh, P	D19	Morris. 15	c. 1755
Ó Pronntaigh, P	D20	NLI G 457	1759
Mag Uidhir, S	D21	RIA 23 A 30	1759
Mc Cay, J	D22	Don. 2*	1762
Mac a Luain, Brian	D23	RIA 23 L 8	1769-70
Ó Cléirceán, Artúr	D24	RIA 23 A 25*	1770-80
Seorsa Mac an Righ	D25	UCD G 8	1772
Mac Gabhain, E	D26	RIA 23 A 10*	1772
Mac Brádaigh, F	D27	BL Eg. 135*	1775
Mac Póilín, S	D28	BF Lav. 2	c. 1760
Mac Póilín, Séamus	D29	Camb. Add. 3085 b*	c. 1760
Mac Laoighre, Pattruig	E1	RIA 23 D 23	1788-1788
Ó Cathalán, Pádraig OFM	E2	FLK A 39*	1788-1793
Mag Uidhir, Toirdhealbhach	E3	RIA 24 P 29*	1789-1789
	E4	RIA 23 I 10	1791-1791
Mag Oireachtaigh, Donnchadh	E5	BL Add. 18749*	1792-1792
Haughey, Edward	E6	BF Lav. 12*	1792-1792
Haughey, Edmond	E7	Don. 2*	1792-1792cc
Ó Raghallaigh, Fearghal	E8	KI 26	1793-1793
Ó Hiethr, Padruig	E9	RIA 23 A 5	1793-1793
Callan, Michael	E10	Morris. 13*	1794-1794
	E11	Camb. Add. 2766	1775-1775
Ó Brinn, Padruig	E12	RIA 24 P 4*	1795-1795
Ó Néill, Aodh	E13	Morris. 9	1785-1785

*On the origins of the Ulster manuscript tradition*

<u>SCRIBE</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>MS</u>	<u>YEAR(S)</u>
Hudson, Thomas	E14	NLI G 730	
	E15	RIA 23 O 57*	1780-1780 cc
Mac Guibhear, Riobhart	E16	RIA 23 D 24*	1776-1776
O Háran, Labhras	E17	TCD 1412*	1777-1777
Mag Oireachtaigh, Donnchadh	E18	BL Add. 18749*	1796-1796
Mac Neil, Uilliam	E19	NLI G 380	1797-1797
Mac Síomón, Niclás	E20	FLK A 39*	1797-1797
Ó Néill, Aodh	E21	BL Eg. 165*	1797-1797
Ó Gribín, Eóin	E22	BF PL 13	1798-1798
Mag Uidhir, Tordhealbhadh	E23	NLS 80	1798-1798
Ó Gribín, Eóin	E24	RIA 24 P 10*	1798-1799
Mac Gabhráin, Séamus	E25	RIA 12 M 9	1799-1799
Mac Eldroi, Séamus	E26	BF PL 2	1799-1799
Dougherty, John	E27	BF PL 12	1776-1776
Mhac Dhubhthir, Riobart	E28	Gal. de H. 11	1799-1799
Ó Néill, Aodh	E29	MN MF 9	1802-1802
Ó Hethir, Padruig	E30	BL Add. 33,196	1797-1797
Ó Gribean, Eoin	E32	Ox 16*	c. 1798
Mag Uidhir, Toirdhealbhadh	E33	RIA 23 O 57*	c. 1798
Mag Uidhir, Toirdhealbhadh	E34	RIA 24 C 55*	1788-1788
Oháran, Labhras	E35	RIA 24 P 29*	c. 1780
Ó Caiside	E36	QUB 8	1777-1778
Ó Maicín, Síomón	E37	BF PL 35	1781-1788
Oa Murchaidh	E38	Don. 1	1777-1777
Ó Hethir, Pádrúig	E39	TCD 1416*	1795-1795
Reur?, Terence	E40	Morris. 13*	1795-1795
Mac Eldroi, Séamus	E41	MN MF 14	
Stafford, T.	E42	Gal. de H. 34	
Mag Oireachtaigh, Donnchadh	E43	BF Lav. 12*	1792-1792
Ó Taran, Labhras	E44	BL Eg. 161	1778-1788
Mag Uidhir, Toirdhealbhadh	E46	Cor. ÓM 56	1780-1780
Ó Maicín, Síomón	E47	RIA 23 L 7	1782-1783
O Conelan, Thomas	E48	MN MF 1	1770-1770c
O Heithir, Pádraig	E49	NYPL ZZ 25698	1795-1795c
	E50	MN MF 10	c. 1778 (Roimh 1779)
Mc Cormick, John (?)	E51	MN C 73 (e)	c. 1787
Ó Brinn, Pádraig	E52	MN R 79	1778-1795